



Vishwamitra





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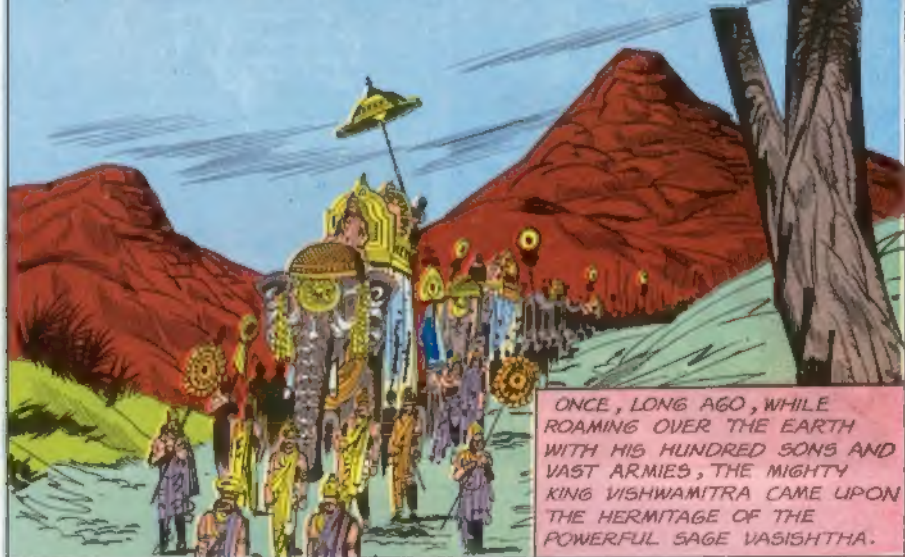
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VISHWAMITRA



VISHWAMITRA WALKED UP TO VASISHTHA.

I BOW MY HEAD AT YOUR FEET.

WELCOME O KING. COME, SIT DOWN. I PRESUME ALL IS WELL IN YOUR KINGDOM.



VISHWAMITRA SAT NEAR THE SAGE AND THEY TALKED OF MANY THINGS. THEN -

I WISH TO HONOUR YOU AND YOUR ROYAL RETINUE. PLEASE LET ME BE THE HOST AT A BANQUET WORTHY OF YOU.

O WISE SAGE, THE VERY SIGHT OF YOU IS A PRIVILEGE AND THIS GRACIOUS WELCOME, AN HONOUR. PRAY PERMIT US TO DEPART NOW.



I INSIST THAT YOU BE THE GUESTS AT MY FEAST.

WE WILL STAY, SINCE IT IS YOUR WISH.



THEREUPON VASISHTHA SENT FOR HIS FAVOURITE COW, THE DIVINE KAMADHENU.*

DEAR KAMADHENU, PROVIDE US WITH FOOD FIT FOR A GREAT KING.



IN AN INSTANT, THERE EMERGED FROM THE DIVINE COW, CHOICE FOOD FOR THE ROYAL VISITORS.



VISHWAMITRA AND HIS MEN ATE TO THEIR HEART'S CONTENT.



I HAVE NEVER TASTED SUCH DELICACIES BEFORE. KAMADHENU SHOULD BELONG TO ME!

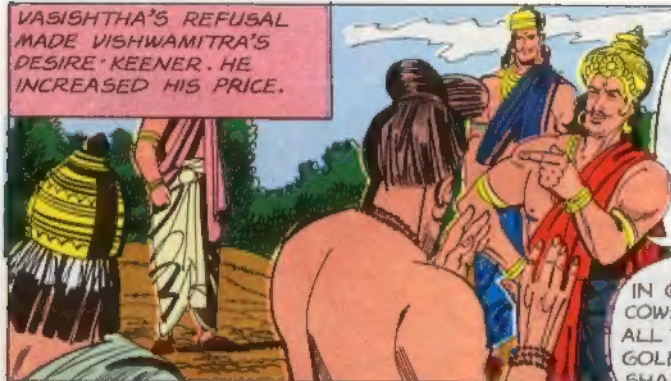
WHEN THE FEAST WAS OVER -

KAMADHENU IS A JEWEL AND JEWELS BELONG TO THE KING. BY RIGHT SHE SHOULD BE MINE. YET I WILL GIVE YOU A HUNDRED THOUSAND MILCH COWS IN RETURN.



NO. I CANNOT PART WITH HER EVEN FOR 1,00,00,000 COWS.

VASISHTHA'S REFUSAL
MADE VISHWAMITRA'S
DESIRE KEENER. HE
INCREASED HIS PRICE.



I WILL GIVE YOU
14,000 ELEPHANTS
HARNESSED AND
CAPARISONED IN
GOLD, 800 CHARI-
OTS OF SOLID
GOLD EACH DRAWN
BY FOUR MILK-
WHITE HORSES,
11,000 THOROUGH-
BRED HORSES
ALSO HARNESSED
IN GOLD AND 10 MILLION
COWS OF VARIOUS HUES.
ALL THIS AND AS MUCH
GOLD AS YOU WANT,
SHALL BE YOURS. GIVE
ME KAMADHENU.

BUT VASISHTHA TURNED DOWN THE
OFFER.

FOR NO TREA-
SURE ON
EARTH WILL I PART
WITH HER, O KING.
SHE IS THE VERY
SOURCE OF MY
SPIRITUAL LIFE.
SHE PROVIDES
ME WITH ALL
I NEED FOR
MY RITUALS.



THEN I SHALL HAVE
TO TAKE HER AWAY
BY FORCE.

VISHWAMITRA CALLED TO HIS MEN.

SEIZE THE
SAGE'S COW
OF PLENTY
AND BRING
HER TO ME.



THE KING'S MEN FELL UPON THE
BEWILDERED KAMADHENU.

WHY DOES THE HOLY ONE PERMIT
THIS OUTRAGE? I HAVE ALWAYS
LOVED AND SERVED HIM!! I WILL
SHAKE OFF MY TORMENTORS
AND GO TO HIM.



KAMADHENU
TOSSED
ASIDE HER
CAPTORS...



... AND FLED.



SHE STOOD BEFORE VASISHTHA,
WEEPING AND LOWING.

O LORD, HAVE
YOU FORSAKEN
ME? DID YOU
NOT SEE HOW
I WAS TREATED?

DEAR ONE, I AM
HELPLESS AGAINST
THE KING AND HIS
MIGHTY ARMY.



KAMADHENLI WAS NOT
CONVINCED.

YOUR SPIRITUAL POWERS ARE
DIVINE AND BOUNDLESS. HIS
MORTAL STRENGTH IS GREAT
BUT LIMITED. O HOLY ONE,
COMMAND ME AND BY YOUR
LIMITLESS SPIRITUAL POWERS
I SHALL HUMBLE THE PRIDE
OF THIS WICKED
WARRIOR.

SO BE IT,
KAMADHENLI.



SO KAMADHENLI LOWED LOUD AND LONG. HORDES
AND HORDES OF WARRIORS SPRANG UP MIRACULOUSLY
AND CHARGED AT THE KING'S SOLDIERS...



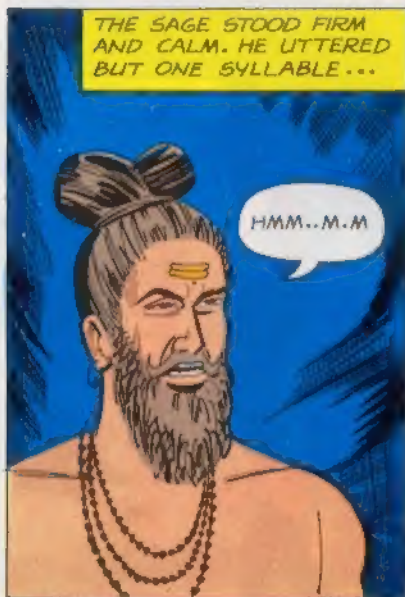
...AND SOON DESTROYED THEM.



ENRAGED, THE SONS OF
VISHWAMITRA RUSHED
TOWARDS VASISHTHA.



THE SAGE STOOD FIRM
AND CALM. HE UTTERED
BUT ONE SYLLABLE...



...THE MERE SOUND OF WHICH BURNT
THE PRINCES AND THEIR HORSES,
CHARIOTS, WEAPONS AND ALL.



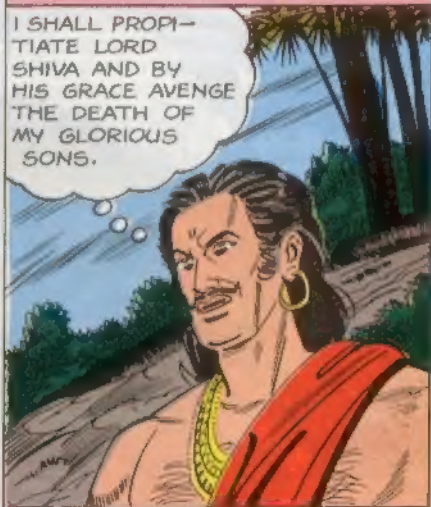
VISHWAMITRA RETURNED TO HIS KINGDOM FULL OF GRIEF AND SHAME. THERE -



MY SON, THE KINGDOM IS YOURS. RULE VIRTUOUSLY OVER IT. I PLAN TO RETIRE TO THE FORESTS FOR A WHILE.

HE WENT STRAIGHT TO THE HIMALAYAS AND BEGAN PRACTISING SEVERE AUSTERITIES

I SHALL PROPITIATE LORD SHIVA AND BY HIS GRACE AVENGE THE DEATH OF MY GLORIOUS SONS.



AT LAST SHIVA WAS PLEASED. HE STOOD BEFORE VISHWAMITRA.

THE BOON THAT YOU SEEK O KING, SHALL BE YOURS.



BY YOUR GRACE, LET ALL KNOWLEDGE OF WEAPONS AND WARFARE BE MINE.

SHIVA GRANTED THE BOON AND WENT BACK TO HIS ABODE.

A TRIUMPHANT VISHWAMITRA NOW TURNED HIS FOOTSTEPS TOWARDS VASISHTHA'S HERMITAGE.

MERCY, O KING. MERCY.



AS SOON AS VISHWAMITRA REACHED THE HERMITAGE HE SENT OUT FLAMING MISSILES AND SET IT ABLAZE.



VASISHTHA TRIED TO STOP THEM, BUT IN VAIN.



A DEADLY SILENCE DESCENDED OVER THE DESERTED HERMITAGE. IT WAS BROKEN BY THE RESONANT VOICE OF VASISHTHA.



SNATCHING HIS STAFF HE ADVANCED TOWARDS VISHWAMITRA.



VISHWAMITRA HURLED THE WEAPON.
BUT —





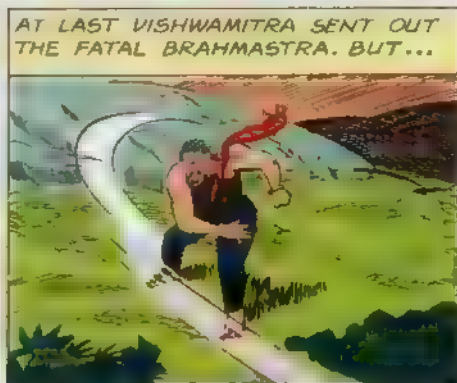
VISHWAMITRA IN
DESPERATION
HURLED WEAPON,
AFTER...



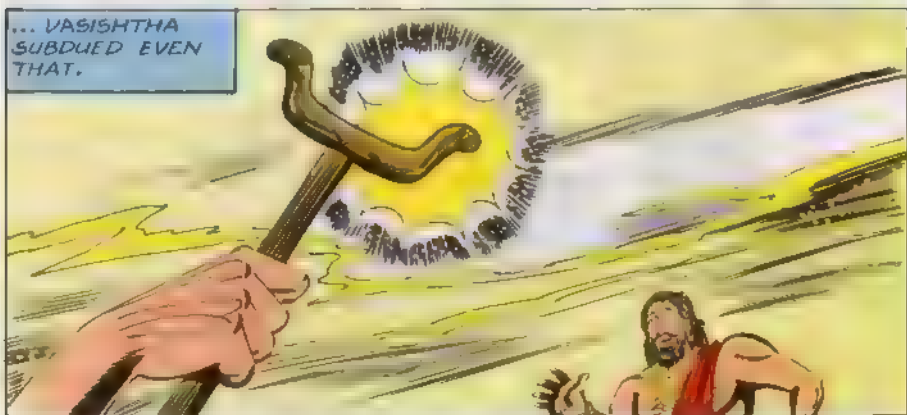
...WEAPON.



BUT THEY WERE
ALL ABSORBED BY
VASISHTHA'S STAFF.



AT LAST VISHWAMITRA SENT OUT
THE FATAL BRAHMASTRA. BUT...



...VASISHTHA
SUBDUED EVEN
THAT.



VISHWAMITRA, HIS PRIDE HUMBLLED,
HAD TO ADMIT DEFEAT.

THE MIGHT
OF A WARRIOR IS USELESS.
SPIRITUAL POWER IS THE
GREATEST POWER OF ALL.
I SHALL REALISE BRAHMAN
AND THE STATUS OF
BRAHMARSHI.

HE LAID DOWN HIS ARMS AND WENT
HOME TO HIS QUEEN.

I WANT TO BECOME
A BRAHMARSHI.
WE SHALL GO TO
A HERMITAGE
IN THE SOUTH
THERE YOU
WILL HELP ME
IN MY
PENANCES.

AS YOU COMMAND,
MY LORD.

SO VISHWAMITRA AND HIS QUEEN
SET OUT. THEY REACHED THE
CHOSEN HERMITAGE AND...



THIS TIME I SHALL
SEEK THE FAVOUR
OF BRAHMA.



...VISHWAMITRA BEGAN HIS
PENANCES IN THAT PERIOD FOUR
VIRTUOUS AND MIGHTY SONS
WERE BORN TO HIM.

THEN VISHWAMITRA CONTINUED HIS AUSTERITIES WITH GREATER SEVERITY UNTIL BRAHMA HAD TO APPEAR BEFORE HIM.

YOU ARE THE GREATEST ASCETIC AMONG KINGS. I CONFER UPON YOU THE STATUS OF RAJARSHI*.

THE STATUS OF MERE RAJARSHI IS NO REWARD FOR THE PENANCES I HAVE UNDERGONE. I SHALL ASK FOR...



BUT BRAHMA HAD ALREADY DEPARTED. VISHWAMITRA WAS DEJECTED.

IN SPITE OF ALL MY PENANCES I AM ONLY A RAJARSHI TO THE GODS. I WILL STRIVE HARDER FOR GREATER SPIRITUAL POWERS.



MEANWHILE TRISHANKU, A GREAT KING OF THOSE TIMES, WAS SUDDENLY SEIZED WITH AN AMBITION.

I WILL ENTER HEAVEN IN MY MORTAL BODY I SHALL ASK MY GURU, VASISHTHA, TO HELP ME PERFORM A SACRIFICE TO ACHIEVE THIS



* RAJA RISHI.

HE SENT FOR VASISHTHA.

I WISH TO ENTER HEAVEN IN THIS MORTAL FRAME OF MINE, SO...

NO! O KING! THAT CAN NEVER BE!



BUT TRISHANKU REFUSED TO GIVE UP THE IDEA.

IF MY GURU WILL NOT HELP ME, HIS SONS WILL. I SHALL GO TO THEIR HERMITAGE IN THE SOUTH.

THERE TRISHANKU TOLD THE SONS OF VASISHTHA OF THEIR FATHER'S DECISION.

PRAY, WILL YOU BECOME MY GURUS AND HELP ME ?

HOW DARE YOU SEEK OUR AID WHEN YOUR GURU, OUR WISE FATHER, HAS DISAPPROVED. YOU ARE NOT FIT TO CLAIM HIM AS YOUR GURU, YOU IGNORANT ONE.

BUT TRISHANKU WAS BENT UPON PERFORMING THE SACRIFICE.

THEN I SHALL HAVE TO SEEK THE HELP OF SOME OTHER SAGE.

THE SONS OF VASISHTHA WERE FURIOUS WITH THE ADAMANT KING.

O EVIL KING, MAY YOU BECOME A CHANDALA*.



TO HIS DISMAY TRISHANKU FOUND HIS BODY TRANSFORMED.

ALAS! ALAS! WHAT HAVE I, A VIRTUOUS KING, DONE TO DESERVE THIS? WHICH SAGE WILL HELP ME NOW, OUTCASTE AS I AM?



THEN SUDDENLY, HE REMEMBERED VISHWAMITRA.

I WILL GO TO THE RAJARSHI. HE WILL HELP ME.



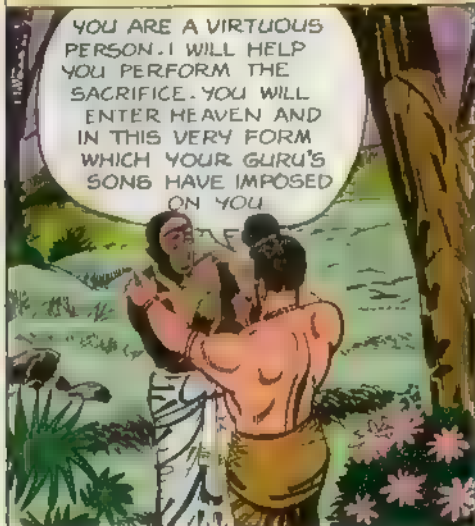
AS HE EXPECTED, VISHWAMITRA RECEIVED HIM COMPASSIONATELY AND LISTENED TO HIS TALE OF WOE.

O HOLY SAGE, APART FROM YOU THERE IS NONE I CAN TURN TO. I BESEECH YOU, HELP ME OUT OF THIS FLIGHT.



* AN OUTCASTE.

VISHWAMITRA CONSOLED AND COMFORTED THE MISERABLE KING.



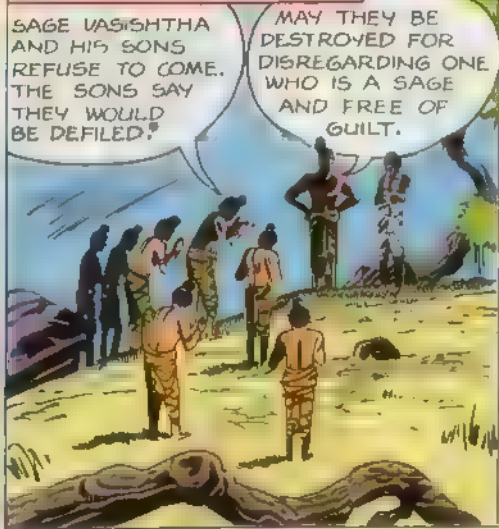
VISHWAMITRA SUMMONED HIS SONS TO HIM.



NEXT VISHWAMITRA CALLED HIS DISCIPLES TO HIM.



THE DISCIPLES RETURNED AFTER A FEW DAYS.

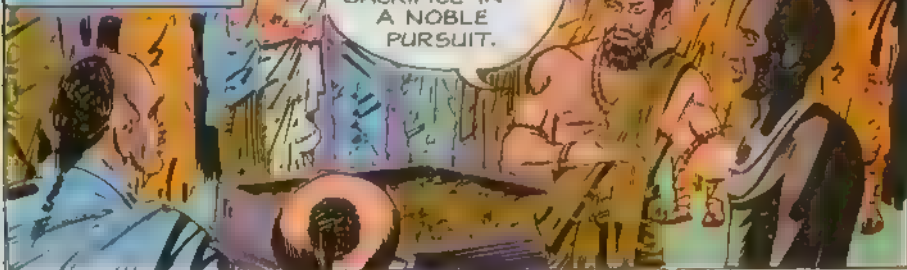


SAGE VASISHTHA AND HIS SONS REFUSE TO COME. THE SONS SAY THEY WOULD BE DEFILED.

• ASSOCIATING ONESELF WITH UNTOUCHABLES MADE ONE UNCLEAN.

WHEN THOSE WHO
HAD ACCEPTED
THE INVITATION
ASSEMBLED-

THIS VIRTUOUS
KING SEEKS
YOUR GOODWILL
FOR THIS
SACRIFICE IN
A NOBLE
PURSUIT.

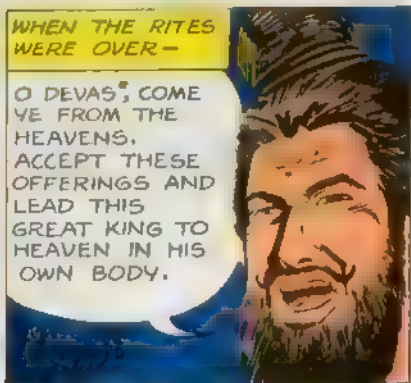


THEN THE RITES BEGAN, WITH
VISHWAMITRA OFFICIATING AS
THE CHIEF PRIEST.



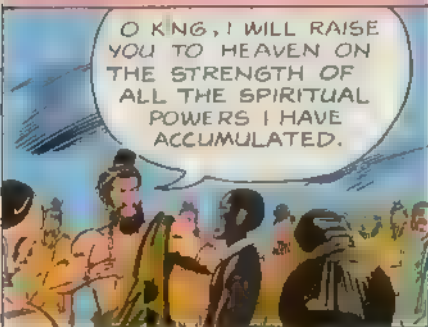
WHEN THE RITES
WERE OVER-

O DEVAS*, COME
YE FROM THE
HEAVENS,
ACCEPT THESE
OFFERINGS AND
LEAD THIS
GREAT KING TO
HEAVEN IN HIS
OWN BODY.



VISHWAMITRA WAITED. BUT
NONE OF THE DEVAS APPEARED.
HE WAS ENRAGED.

O KING, I WILL RAISE
YOU TO HEAVEN ON
THE STRENGTH OF
ALL THE SPIRITUAL
POWERS I HAVE
ACCUMULATED.



VISHWAMITRA THEN LOOKED
SKYWARDS.

MAY YOU
ASCEND TO
HEAVEN AS YOU
ARE, O VIRTUOUS
KING.

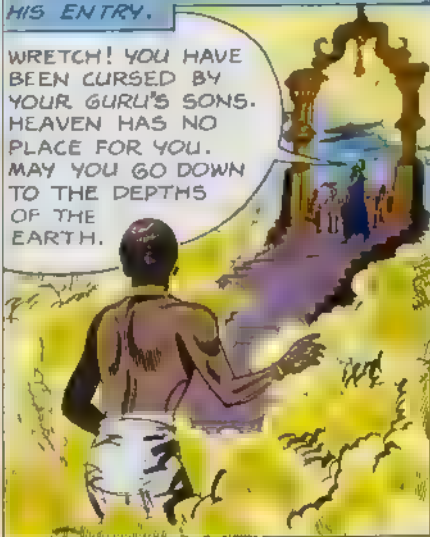


HARDLY HAD VISHWAMITRA
UTTERED THESE WORDS THAN
THE ASCENSION OF TRISHANKU
BEGAN.

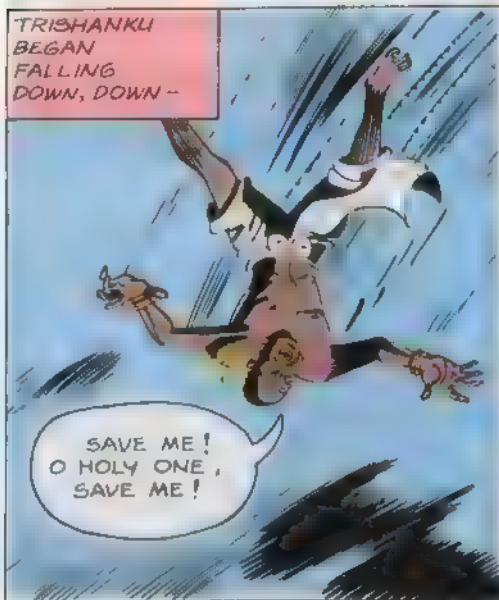


BUT WHEN HE REACHED HEAVEN,
INDRA AND THE DEVAS BARRED
HIS ENTRY.

WRETCH! YOU HAVE
BEEN CURSED BY
YOUR GURU'S SONS.
HEAVEN HAS NO
PLACE FOR YOU.
MAY YOU GO DOWN
TO THE DEPTHS
OF THE
EARTH.



TRISHANKU
BEGAN
FALLING
DOWN, DOWN -



SAVE ME!
O HOLY ONE,
SAVE ME!

VISHWAMITRA WOULD NOT
ACCEPT DEFEAT.



MAY YOU STOP
WHERE YOU ARE.
I SHALL CREATE
A HEAVEN AROUND
YOU.

AND VISHWAMITRA
CREATED SEVEN
PLANETS, THE
SAPTARSHIS* AND
TWENTY-SEVEN
STARS BUT HE WAS
NOT SATISFIED.

WILL CREATE
ANOTHER INDRA. OR
BETTER STILL I WILL
HURL INDRA OUT OF
HEAVEN AND MAKE
TRISHANKU THE KING
OF THE DEVAS!

WHEN THE DEVAS DIVINED HIS
INTENTIONS, THEY WERE
PERTURBED.

WE MUST
STOP HIM.

THEY APPEARED BEFORE HIM
AND PLEADED WITH HIM

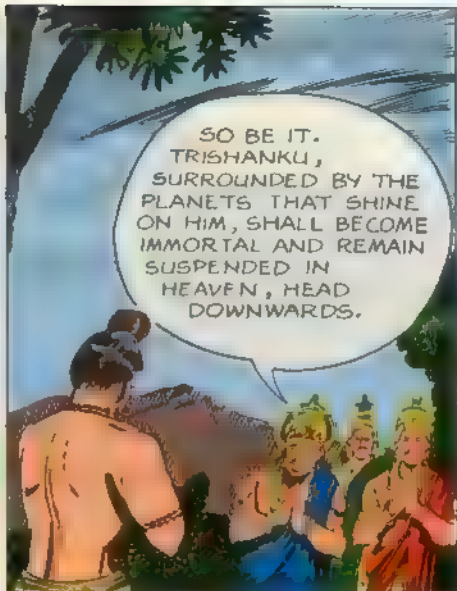
O SAGE, THE
KING HAS BEEN
CURSED BY HIS
GUKU'S SONS.
HOW CAN WE GIVE
HIM A PLACE IN
HEAVEN?

BUT VISHWAMITRA WAS FIRM.

I HAVE PROMISED TO HELP HIM. LET HIM ENTER YOUR HEAVEN. LET THE PLANETS I HAVE CREATED EXIST AS LONG AS YOUR HEAVEN DOES. THEN INDRA SHALL REMAIN IN HEAVEN, THE SOLE KING OF THE DEVAS.



SO BE IT. TRISHANKU, SURROUNDED BY THE PLANETS THAT SHINE ON HIM, SHALL BECOME IMMORTAL AND REMAIN SUSPENDED IN HEAVEN, HEAD DOWNWARDS.



AS THE DEVAS, HEAVING SIGHS OF RELIEF, DEPARTED TO HEAVEN—

EVEN AS A RAJARSHI, VISHWAMITRA HAS HUMBLD US. WE MUST ENSURE THAT HE NEVER BECOMES A BRAHMARSHI.



I HAVE HUMBLD THE DEVAS BUT EXHAUSTED MY SPIRITUAL POWERS. I WILL START ALL OVER AGAIN.



HE TURNED TO HIS SONS
AND DISCIPLES.

THE WORLD HAS BEEN
TOO MUCH WITH ME
HERE. MY PENANCES
HAVE COME TO NAUGHT.
I SHALL GO WEST TO
THE PEACEFUL PUSH-
KAR TO RESUME MY
PENANCES.

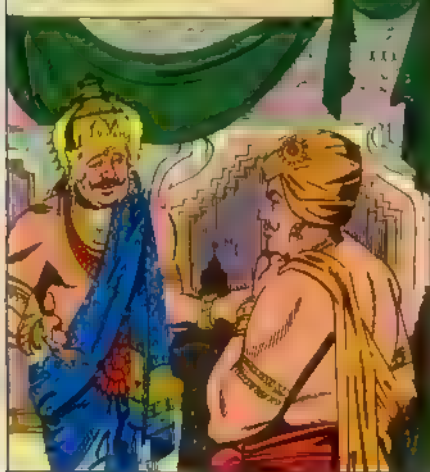


MEANWHILE AMBARISHA, KING
OF AYODHYA, HAD DECIDED TO
PERFORM A SACRIFICE. BUT -

YOUR MAJESTY,
THE SACRIFICIAL
ANIMAL HAS
BEEN STOLEN.



AMBARISHA HUNTED FAR
AND WIDE FOR THE
ANIMAL, BUT AS INDRA
WAS THE UNKNOWN
THIEF HIS SEARCH WAS
HOPELESS.



THE PRIEST GAVE HIM
THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE.

YOU WILL HAVE TO
PROVIDE A HUMAN VICTIM
TO COMPLETE THE SACRI-
FICE. OR ELSE GREAT
HARM WILL BEFALL YOUR
KINGDOM AND YOUR
SUBJECTS.



AMBARISHA SET OUT AGAIN. HIS QUEST TOOK HIM THROUGH CITIES AND FORESTS TILL HE CAME UPON THE HERMITAGE WHERE RICHIKA LIVED WITH HIS WIFE AND SONS.

GREAT KING, WHAT BRINGS YOU TO OUR HUMBLE ABODE?

AMBARISHA TOLD HIM ALL.

O SAGE, GIVE ME ONE OF YOUR SONS FOR 100,000 COWS AND HELP ME COMPLETE THE SACRIFICE.

RICHIKA AND HIS WIFE LOOKED AT EACH OTHER.

I WILL NEVER GIVE UP MY ELDEST SON.

MY YOUNGEST SHALL EVER REMAIN WITH US.

SHUNAHSHEPA, THE MIDDLE SON, STEPPED FORWARD BEFORE HIS PARENTS COULD SAY MORE.

TAKE ME, THE MIDDLE SON, O KING, AND GIVE MY PARENTS 100,000 COWS.

DELIGHTED THAT HIS SEARCH HAD COME TO AN END, AMBARISHA TOOK SHUNAHSHEPA AND MOUNTING HIS CHARIOT TURNED HOMEWARD.

ON THE WAY THEY HAD TO
PASS THROUGH THE FOREST
OF PUSHKARA.

LET US REST
FOR A WHILE AT THAT
HERMITAGE OVER
THERE.



AS THE KING RESTED, SHUNAHSHE-
PA WANDERED ABOUT THE
HERMITAGE. SUDDENLY -

SAGE
VISHWAMITRA,
MY MOTHER'S
BROTHER
HERE!



SHUNAHSHEPA RAN TO HIM, FELL
AT HIS FEET AND TOLD HIM ALL.
THEN -

O HOLY ONE, I HAVE
NEITHER FATHER
NOR MOTHER.
O LORD, PROTECT
ME. LET ME LIVE,
LEAD A SPIRITU-
AL LIFE AND
ATTAIN HEAVEN.

BE CONSOLED,
O VIRTUOUS
SON. I WILL
NOT LET
YOU DIE.



VISHWAMITRA TURNED TO
HIS SONS.

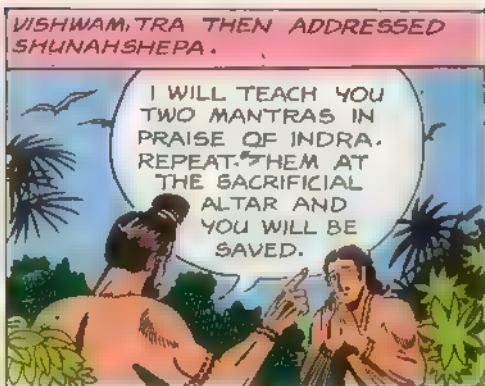
SHUNAHSHEPA HAS
SOUGHT MY PROTECTION.
ONE OF YOU TAKE HIS
PLACE AND RESCUE
HIM. I HAVE GIVEN
HIM MY WORD.
HELP ME KEEP
IT.



O FATHER,
WOULD YOU
ABANDON ONE OF YOUR
OWN SONS TO
PROTECT ANOTHER'S?

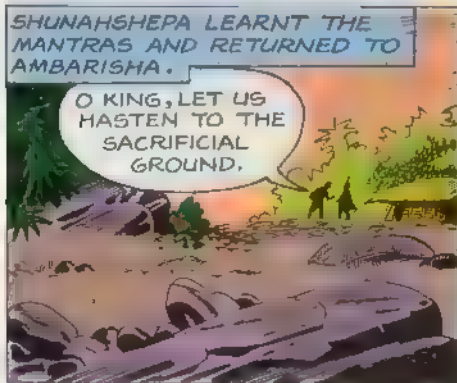


YOU ARROGANT
SONS HAVE YOU
NO AFFECTION
FOR ME? MAY
YOU LOSE YOUR
CASTE AND
WANDER ABOUT
THE EARTH
EATING THE
FLESH OF
DOGS.



VISHWAMITRA THEN ADDRESSED
SHUNAHSHEPA.

I WILL TEACH YOU
TWO MANTRAS IN
PRAISE OF INDRA.
REPEAT THEM AT
THE SACRIFICIAL
ALTAR AND
YOU WILL BE
SAVED.

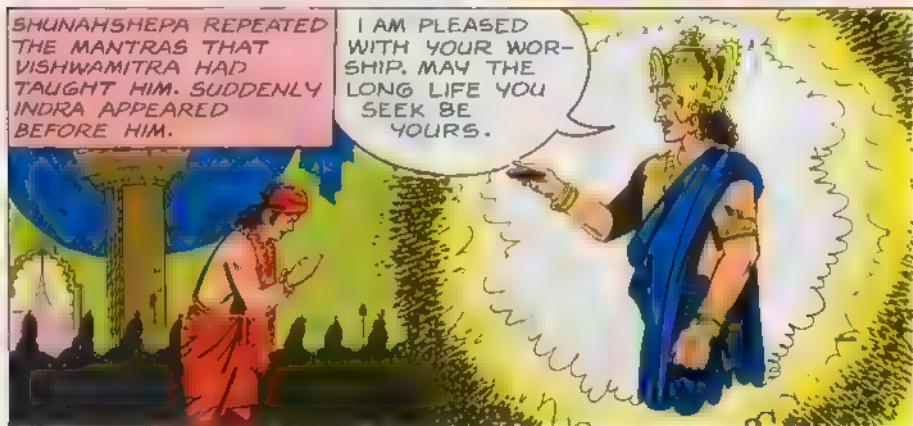


SHUNAHSHEPA LEARNT THE
MANTRAS AND RETURNED TO
AMBARISHA.

O KING, LET US
HASTEN TO THE
SACRIFICIAL
GROUND.



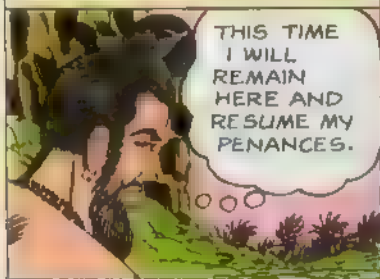
WHEN THEY REACHED THE
SACRIFICIAL ALTAR, AMBA-
RISHA HANDED SHUNAHSHEPA
OVER TO THE PRIEST.



SHUNAHSHEPA REPEATED
THE MANTRAS THAT
VISHWAMITRA HAD
TAUGHT HIM. SUDDENLY
INDRA APPEARED
BEFORE HIM.

I AM PLEASED
WITH YOUR WOR-
SHIP. MAY THE
LONG LIFE YOU
SEEK BE
YOURS.

HE HAD KEPT HIS WORD BUT
VISHWAMITRA HAD ONCE
AGAIN SPENT HIS SPIRITUAL
FORCE IN CURSING HIS SONS.



ONE DAY WHILE HE WAS ON THE
BANK OF THE PUSHKARA LAKE -

IT'S THE IRRESISTIBLE
APSARA, MENAKA.
I MUST MAKE HER
MINE.



AS MENAKA CAME OUT OF THE
LAKE, VISHWAMITRA DECLARED
HIS LOVE TO HER.



A FEW YEARS PASSED
BEFORE VISHWAMITRA
SUDDENLY REALISED
HIS FOLLY.

I SEE NOW!
THE DEVAS
MUST HAVE
SENT YOU
HERE TO
DISTRACT
ME.



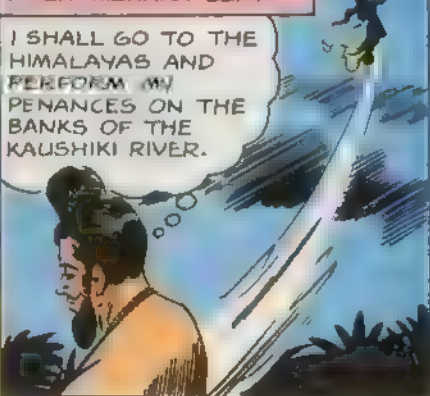
MENAKA, AWARE OF THE
SAGE'S FIERCE TEMPER,
TREMBLED WITH FEAR. BUT
THE SAGE WAS KIND TO HER.

GO BACK TO
THE DEVAS,
O APSARA.
MAY YOU
FARE
WELL.



WHEN MENAKA LEFT -

I SHALL GO TO THE
HIMALAYAS AND
PERFORM MY
PENANCES ON THE
BANKS OF THE
KAUSHIKI RIVER.



SO SEVERE WERE HIS PENANCES
THERE THAT THE DEVAS WERE
PERTURBED. THEY APPROACHED
BRAHMA.

LET VISHWA-
MITRA HAVE
THE TITLE
OF MAHARSHI.

SO
BE IT.

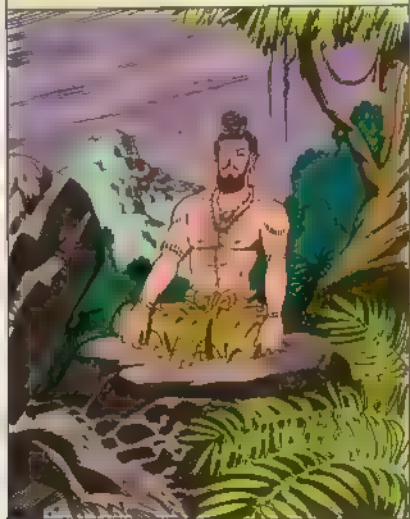
BRAHMA APPEARED
BEFORE VISHWAMITRA.

O RISHI, I AM
PLEASED WITH
YOUR AUSTERITY.
YOU HAVE EARNED
THE STATUS OF
A MAHARSHI.*

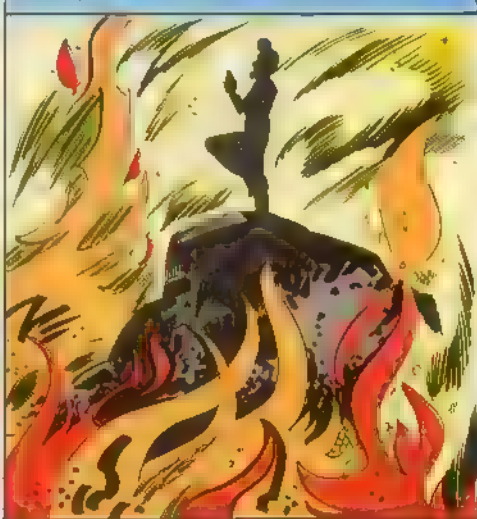
MY PENANCES WERE
FOR THE STATUS
OF A BRAHMARSHI.
YOU REGARD ME
ONLY AS A MAHARSHI.
I WILL HAVE TO
SUBDUCE MY
PASSIONS FURTHER.

YES. YOU
HAVE NOT YET
GAINED MASTERY
OVER YOUR
SENSES.

WHEN BRAHMA DEPARTED,
VISHWAMITRA INTENSIFIED HIS
AUSTERITIES.



IN SUMMER HE STOOD ON ONE FOOT
IN THE MIDST OF FIVE BLAZING
FIRES, LIVING ONLY ON AIR.



THROUGH THE RAINY SEASON
HE CONTINUED STANDING.



AND IN WINTER HE STOOD
IN THE MIDDLE OF A
COLD STREAM.



THE DEVAS WERE ONCE AGAIN PERTURBED. THEN INDRA HAD AN IDEA.

I WILL ASK THE APSARA RAMBHA OF MY COURT TO DISTRACT HIM.

HE SENT FOR RAMBHA.

YOU MUST ATTRACT MAHARSHI VISHWAMITRA AND DISTURB HIS PENANCES.

LORD, PLEASE DO NOT SEND ME ON THIS TASK. THE SAGE HAS A TERRIBLE TEMPER AND A READY CURSE.

BUT INDRA REASSURED HER.

DO NOT WORRY, RAMBHA. I WILL TAKE THE FORM OF A CUCKOO AND WILL SIT ON A BRANCH NEAR BY. GO, ADORN YOURSELF.

AS SOON AS RAMBHA WAS READY, THEY CAME TO VISHWAMITRA'S GROVE.

I WILL ROUSE HIM WITH MY NOTES. THAT IS THE MOMENT FOR YOU TO APPROACH HIM.

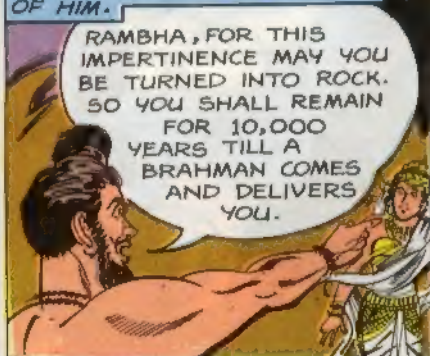
INDRA BEGAN
WARBLING. RAMBHA
WALKED TOWARDS
VISHWAMITRA.



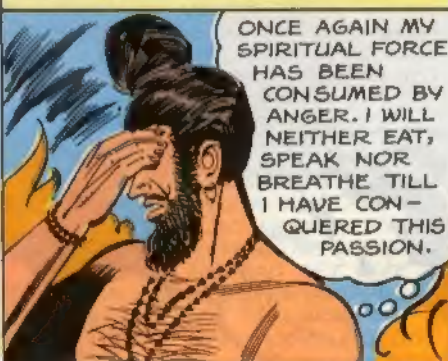
VISHWAMITRA OPENED HIS
EYES.



VISHWAMITRA'S RAGE ONCE
AGAIN GOT THE BETTER
OF HIM.



WHEN HE HEARD THIS, INDRA
FLED FROM THE SCENE.



VISHWAMITRA WENT EASTWARD AND BEGAN HIS MOST SEVERE AUSTERITIES. WHEN HE WAS SURE THAT HE HAD CONQUERED ANGER—

I HAVE SUCCEEDED. I SHALL FIRST BREAK MY LONG FAST.



AS VISHWAMITRA SAT DOWN TO EAT—

O HOLY SAGE, I AM HUNGRY.



IT WAS INDRA WHO HAD COME IN THE GUISE OF A BRAHMAN TO TEST HIM. VISHWAMITRA WITHOUT UTTERING A WORD OFFERED HIM THE FOOD.



AFTER YEARS OF FURTHER PENANCE, THE TERRIBLE POWERS AMASSED BY VISHWAMITRA BEGAN TO EMIT PERVERSIVE THICK SMOKE, STRIKING TERROR AMONG THE BEINGS OF THE THREE WORLDS.



TERRIFIED, INDRA AND THE DEVAS WENT TO BRAHMA.

IF THE STATUS OF BRAHMARSHI IS NOT GRANTED TO VISHWAMITRA NOW, HE WILL DESTROY THE THREE WORLDS AND THEN HE WILL BE CONTENT ONLY WITH THE SOVEREIGNTY OF MY HEAVEN.

DO NOT FEAR. I SHALL GRANT HIM THE STATUS OF BRAHMARSHI. HE DESERVES IT.

BRAHMA ACCOMPANIED BY ALL THE DEVAS APPEARED BEFORE THE SAGE.

O VISHWAMITRA, BY THE POWER OF YOUR PENANCES YOU HAVE ACHIEVED THE STATUS OF BRAHMARSHI.

THEN INSTRUCT ME IN THE LORE OF THE BRAHMAN AND LET VASISHTHA ACKNOWLEDGE MY PRESENT STATUS.

THE GODS LED VASISHTHA TO VISHWAMITRA.

MY GREETINGS TO YOU, O BRAHMARSHI.

VISHWAMITRA TOO PAID HOMAGE TO VASISHTHA. THEN, HAVING ACHIEVED WHAT HE HAD SET OUT TO ACHIEVE, VISHWAMITRA ENRICHED THE WORLDS WITH HIS GOOD DEEDS.



Illustrated Classics From India

Vishwamitra

Known as the Land of the Rishis or *Rishi Bhoomi*, India proudly claims the heritage of the *rishis* (sages) as its own. Here, Vishwamitra stands out as a superlative example of the accomplishments of the *rishis*.

Vishwamitra was a Kshatriya king who constantly explored the realms of immortality beyond the kingdom of earth. His confrontation with Sage Vasishtha convinced him of the superiority of spiritual power over physical strength, and so he set out to attain it.

When he was given the status of *Rajarshi*, he was not content. This was because the word connoted a rishi who was born a Kshatriya and was considered inferior to a *Brahmarshi*, a *rishi* who had been born a Brahmin.

The arduous paths that Vishwamitra had to tread to conquer his passions in order to reach spiritual heights are described in detail, giving us a glimpse of the glory of the *rishis*.

India was later named after Bharata, the grandson of Vishwamitra.

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